Communities are for some people and not others. Discuss.

I think that most communities are exclusive. By this, I mean that the group is defined by who is included AND who is excluded. Hence, I think that communities are for some people and not others.

In class this week we started by talking about the different types of communities we belong to. We talked about how we can belong to communities in our school, our suburb, our soccer teams, or even online groups.

On Wednesday, we all went on trails to different communities within Melbourne to investigate what makes them livable. This flowed on neatly from the Monday discussion because by analyzing what makes a suburb a liveable community we can begin to think about whether everyone has access to it.

I went to Kew. I found myself thinking a lot about two main themes: 1) How expensive the houses must be; and 2) How old the people are. Through some of the discussion we had as a group I realized that the two things are sort of related. Because the houses are so expensive, the only people who can afford to live there are people that owned the houses before the prices went through the roof. As a result of this, Kew is no longer a community for people on an average wage, and is therefore defined by it’s exclusivity, i.e. who can’t afford to live there, not just who can.

Someone else on the trail also mentioned that the suburb had a distinct lack of Asian and African descended residents, and that it was mostly Europeans. This made me wonder whether the suburb was racist in nature, and therefore defined by it’s exclusivity, or simply whether the price put it out of reach of families who have been here less than a couple of generations. Then I wondered if the two things are the same. I couldn’t really come to a conclusion on this point, but what I did decide was that it was sort of irrelevant to the question at hand. If Asian and African descended Australians felt that the suburb excluded them, then it did, and hence the suburb was exclusive in nature.

The fact that Kew is exclusive doesn’t mean that all communities are exclusive of course. You can’t prove that all dogs are black by showing me one black dog. What I really need to do is find a community that isn’t exclusive in nature. If I can find one, then my contention is wrong, but I can take it as held until then.

Going through the list of communities that I belong to failed to come up with a totally inclusive community:

The community of my friends is age and language based.

The University High community excludes people from the country.

My tennis club doesn’t cater for disabled people.

The Australian community doesn’t cater for homosexuals, even if it’s much better than it was.

No internet site I belong to qualifies as a community as I don’t have to interact in any way with other members of the community (Monday’s class decided that interaction was needed).

The suburb I live in is sort of a community, but even though it’s not as exclusive as Kew, still has no place for the homeless.

In conclusion, as I can’t find a community that is designed for all, then the statement isn’t rebutted and can be taken to stand.